



County of Roanoke

Board of Supervisors

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April 14, 2006

Christopher Collins
Project Manager, Environmental Division
Virginia Dept. of Transportation
1401 E. Broad Street
Richmond, VA 23219

Re: Roanoke County's comments on the Interstate 81 Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Collins:

We are pleased to have the opportunity to express our comments and concerns on the Interstate 81 Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) and on the much needed transportation improvement project. Roanoke County is situated along this vital corridor and its efficient and safe operation is essential to the quality of life we enjoy.

We feel that we need to clarify some statements that we observed in the Tier 1 DEIS pertinent to or attributable to Roanoke County. In Table 4.1-1, Table 5.1-1, and possibly in other areas of the Tier 1 DEIS, statements are made relevant to the County's transportation objectives and potential consistency with local transportation plans. In those tables and text, it states that Roanoke County desires to "limit widening of I-81". This is contradictory to numerous resolutions and Board actions that this and previous Board of Supervisors (dating back to at least 1997) have passed that are "very supportive of the Virginia Department of Transportation's proposed plan to increase the number of north and south travel lanes" on Interstate 81 and that "Roanoke County continues to support VDOT's proposed plan to widen I-81 from its present four lanes".

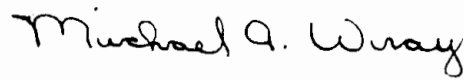
Further, we want to reiterate some previous resolutions from the Roanoke County Board of Supervisors, in addition to the ones in support of widening that are mentioned above, that pertain to the Interstate 81 corridor. Resolution 071498-1 states support of the improvements to Interstate 81 but also requests County participation in the planning and design stages of the project. We are hopeful that this coordination and input will continue and become even more detailed and involved as we enter into the Tier 2 phase of this environmental study. In addition, Resolution 062403-6.d supports rail alternatives to complement any planned improvements to Interstate 81.

County staff recently presented a summary of the information included in the Tier 1 Draft EIS. Subsequent to review of that information and discussion amongst the Board of Supervisors, we compiled the following list of comments for your consideration:

- We encourage the use of an improvement concept with a variable number of lanes to address the varying traffic demands and capacity needs.
- We oppose local toll options that would assess County residents merely commuting in the immediate area.
- We support separated lanes for segments of the Interstate 81 corridor, especially in urban and high traffic areas.
- We request that improvements to Route 11 precede any wide-scale improvements to Interstate 81.

We look forward to working with you and other VDOT staff during Tier 2 of the NEPA process and throughout this very important project. Feel free to contact the Board with any questions or to discuss these comments. We can be reached by phone at 540-772-2005 or by email at bos@roanokecountyva.gov.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael A. Wray". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael A. Wray
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

cc: Joseph P. McNamara, Vice-Chairman, Windsor Hills Magisterial District
Joseph B. "Butch" Church, Catawba Magisterial District
Michael W. Altizer, Vinton Magisterial District
Richard C. Flora, Hollins Magisterial District
Elmer Hodge, Roanoke County Administrator
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